

The charity hospitals the poor can't afford



Father O'Leary — extraordinary powers.

A YOUNG MOTHER took her sick baby to a hospital. She was told there was no room.

Yet in the same hospital there were three healthy babies. They were being kept there because their impoverished parents hadn't paid the bill.

That small hospital is in Callao, a riverside town not far from Lima, the capital of Peru.

The hospital isn't a state hospital. It's a relief centre specially set up for the sick and the destitute. A hospital which, the founders say, is based on love... "a love for God and a love for his creatures."

A hospital founded by Jospice International, the well-known charity based at Thornton, near Liverpool.

Jospice, which claims to have started ten medical relief centres in Third World countries, raises up to £100,000 each year.

It does this by publicity and advertisements which are usually sanctimonious, often misleading and sometimes plainly dishonest.

A full page advert in the Catholic paper The Universe proclaimed "Jospice gives dignity to the individual" and said the Callao centre aids people "who have no money to pay for treatment."

Indeed, Jospice's constitution clearly states that care and treatment in any hospices of St Joseph will be free of charge. And out-patients will only pay "a nominal fee".

This may be believed by the people who give money. But not by the volunteer doctors and nurses who work for Jospice.

Doreen Twivey used to be a keen supporter of Jospice. She encouraged her friends to start projects to raise money; she worked as a nurse in the Callao hospice... and then she resigned, deeply upset by what she had found.

In her resignation letter she wrote: "From the day of my arrival I have seen many of the poor people which we are supposed to be serving being exploited on every side. Maximum charges being made for medicines..."

She told of the mother and baby, who were told there was no room. There were other instances like this. The hospices are for the 'destitute and dying'. So says the publicity, anyway.

Doreen Twivey wrote: "I could tell of Menancia, a 35-year-old woman whose husband had been killed in an

accident a year ago, who had four young children, and came to us with terminal cancer. Did you know the medical director wanted to send her home?"

"There have been too many disillusionments, too many lies told..."

Doreen wasn't the only person to discover the truth about the way the relief centres were being run.

Last year 16 people, including members of the management committee and eleven doctors and nurses working in Peru resigned after a bitter struggle to improve the hospices failed.

The doctors and nurses had gone to work amongst the poor, and found themselves working mostly with people who could pay. Eileen Hallahan, a nurse, wrote: "The poor are not able to come to the hospice because they cannot afford to."

They had gone to work for an independent charity and found they were working for "just an annexe of the General Hospital."

The hospices in Peru are controlled by the Peruvian government. The government fixes the charges for treatment and medicine; appoints a director for the hospital, and even decides who the hospice should cater for.

Janet Proffit, Jospice's administrator at a new hospice in Villa El Salvador, spent £700 equipping it as a hospital for poor sick children. The Peruvian government decided it should pioneer the new maternity



Some of our successes have been appalling

A Jospice advertisement

programme... and so the money was wasted.

Jospice is the brainchild of Father Francis O'Leary. He is the director but seems more like a dictator. He has extraordinary powers — powers which he sometimes uses in extraordinary ways.

As a director he appoints all members of the management and branch committees, and decides how long they can hold office. He approves any resolution of the management committee before any action is taken. The constitution cannot be changed unless he agrees.

Last year, he flew to Lima with three others, and stayed in one of the most luxurious hotels in Peru.

He went there when the doctors and nurses threatened to resign. But he refused to see them, although he stayed about ten days. That little stay in the Bolivar Hotel cost about £1,200 — enough to buy a badly-needed Land Rover for one hospice. Not to mention the return fares. They cost almost £2,400.

And while the hospices were desperate for money, he spent massive amounts on phone calls and cablegrams. In three days he sent one cablegram costing £203, another £198 and yet another for £98. Some of the telephone calls between London and Peru lasted up to 1½ hours.

At any one time, only two or three hospices actually receive financial help from Jospice. But father O'Leary includes others in his newsletters, such as Rawalpindi hospice which he helped start. This is now part of the Pakistan health service and no longer receives money from Jospice.

Father O'Leary is, in fact, a skilful publicist. He's appeared on "This is Your Life" and he's not afraid to build up his image.

In a newsletter he wrote: "As each day goes by I appreciate what a wonderful association of people we are."

His adverts say "He's a can-do man in a can't-do era." A man who has "brought style to the business of begging."

But now he's a man whose methods are being questioned by volunteer doctors, nurses and even Jospice collectors.

Street musician is cleared of begging

STREET MUSICIAN Bob Carr has been cleared by Liverpool magistrates of "wandering abroad to beg alms in Church Street."

Bob is one of the Picasso Sisters, a group of street musicians who won a similar case last year. He can often be seen playing his violin outside C & A's in Church Street, at Kirkby Market and Paddy's Market.

The two policemen who arrested him said that on May 2 he had stepped in front of two women and said: "Any chance of some money?"

Asked why the two women were not in court to give evidence, both policemen said they had not taken their names. "They were just passers-by," said Con. Gowan.

Bob Carr offered a different explanation: the police weren't sure what to charge him with. (He says there was discussion about this in his presence, with the sergeant at

Copperas Hill police station.) The defence suggested the police then discovered that to 'beg alms' you actually have to accost somebody and ask them for money — hence the mysterious 'two women'.

Bob denied he asked for money and produced witnesses who supported this.

The prosecuting solicitor then asked him whether his open violin case was not "equivalent to a beggar's bowl."

Bob replied: "I provide a service and people put in what they reckon it's worth. Some put in 10p and others just smile."

The magistrates said there was reasonable doubt and Bob was entitled to the benefit of that doubt. In their hurry to go for lunch, the magistrates forgot to declare the case dismissed. But the defence managed to hold them back long enough to do so.



What's fit to print...

I HAVE JUST read the Liverpool Free Press with great interest.

I was impressed with contents of your newspaper particularly with regard to the exposure of council's corruption.

However I do think your views are one-sided. I did not read anything about work people who don't play fair.

A recent example of corporation workers playing golf during working hours. I am sure there are many such other examples.

I would certainly read your paper if you played fair to both sides. — A. MATTHEWS, E.S. CROSS, Ward G 12, Whiston General Hospital, Whiston.

● This is the second letter making this point and it deserves an answer.

If readers want information about "work people" who don't "play fair" they will have to get it elsewhere.

They shouldn't find it difficult. Newspapers are willing enough to carry stories about idle workers, social security fiddlers, shoplifters, etc.

The Free Press does not regard this sort of behaviour as particularly

news-worthy. In a society of winners and losers, it's not at all surprising that some of the losers hit back now and again.

It may not be playing the game, but who said the rules were fair to start with?

The Free Press takes an interest in a different group of people: The people at the top, the winners, those who want us to carry on playing their game, while often breaking the rules themselves.

We do this because when politicians, businessmen or policemen break the rules, a lot of us are affected.

Yet, strangely, our marvellous "free press" don't seem so interested. The public will probably never know the truth about the Northern Ireland government Minister who was a gun-runner, or about alleged torture by police in Runcorn, or about the Cabinet Minister with odd business connections in the Midlands.

All these stories have been researched by national newspapers — and then dropped.

So, in a sense, our coverage has to be one-sided. We have chosen our side. And that's what it comes down to in the end.

Professional vandalism

IT WOULD SEEM that some local housing associations have found a means by which the City Surveyor's department can be used to give a carte blanche to any plans to demolish listed buildings, conservation areas, etc., simply by leaving the premises vacant and accessible so that the lead thieves, vandals and co. can do their worst, and then apply to the City Surveyor's department to have the building declared unsafe.

When this happens, it seems that the requirement is not that the association concerned should have to dig into its own pocket to put right the damage which they through their negligence have cause, but that they are then allowed to knock down the building and put up a brand new structure, a particularly lucrative prospect for a "fee-generating" housing association comprised of estate agents, architects or professional housing managers, and one which they have obviously had in mind all along.

All in all it would seem to me to be a very worrying state of affairs. Not only are buildings being destroyed which are designated as being of outstanding historic or architectural merit, but the production of much needed units of accommodation is being delayed, and when they are finally released they have cost much more than a rehabilitation scheme

as new-build is invariably more expensive than rehab., which is probably why this type of problem is more prevalent amongst "fee-generating" housing associations than others.

I look forward to comments regarding this problem. — R.I. CAMPBELL, Rankin Hall, Elmwood Road, Liverpool. L18 8DG.

Not so open government

KNOWSLEY COUNCIL recently announced a new policy of "open government". So we asked to look at some of their files. This is the reply:

THANK YOU for your letter of the 4th instant, but I regret that I am unable to accede to your request to inspect the files of the two transactions to which you refer between Kirkby Urban District Council and DCD Construction (Merseyside) Limited or the back copies of the Borough Architect's Report to the Policy and Education Committees.

In the penultimate paragraph of your letter you refer to a similar request from BBC Nationwide, but I must point out that this request was only granted after considerable discussion and then only to prove a negative.

I am sorry I cannot be more helpful. — J.M. CARTER, Borough Secretary, P.O. Box 17, Municipal Buildings, Kirkby, Liverpool L32 1TX.

The British Legion can damage your health

PATIENTS suffering from chest complaints in Fazakerley Hospital look forward to the weekly visits from the British Legion.

With rare understanding, smiling Legion members dispense free Player's No. 6.

Hospital staff try to discourage smoking as a health hazard. In the chest ward it is particularly dangerous: Long-stay patients may remember the man who was quickly transferred to the intensive care unit after setting fire to his personal oxygen supply.



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